

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

119-
H755R

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

RECEIVED
SEP 12 1932

Buy your Canned Fruits and Vegetables by Grade

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, September 6, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Yes, Mr. Sherman has kept his promise to the Household Calendar audience. He's over at the other microphone, and he says he's ready to tell us everything we want to know about the new quality grades on canned fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Sherman, maybe you don't know what a large order that is. I try to keep up on all the new developments in grading foods that will help us consumers know what we're buying. But I confess I'd never heard about "U. S. Grade A" canned peas until I talked to you the other day. That very evening, though, I saw an advertisement in the paper featuring a week-end special on "Standard Corn, Standard tomatoes, Standard Cut Beans." Are these the Government graded canned vegetables you were telling me about?

MR. SHERMAN: It's hard to tell, Miss Van Deman. Maybe the word Standard in that advertisement denoted the same quality of canned corn and tomatoes as "U. S. Grade C", officially adopted by the Department of Agriculture. Maybe it didn't. Maybe the person who wrote the advertising copy for the grocery store used Standard just as a good reassuring term. But when packers and distributors of canned goods put a grade name on the label of each can, then everybody all along the line will know exactly what is the quality of the food inside. You notice I said when this happens. For this idea of labeling canned goods with standard grades to indicate quality is comparatively new.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, we consumers will certainly be glad to have quality grades on canned goods. Of course, we know now that all canned foods put up commercially for sale in this country are wholesome. Our pure food inspectors see to that. But when we're having company to dinner and want something fancy it will help a lot if we can order a certain grade. And we won't mind paying a premium for this top-notch grade. Then when we want just a good medium grade, we'd like to select that and pay for it on an equally definite quality basis.

Mr. Sherman, will you tell us just how this quality grade idea works on tomatoes, for instance?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, tomatoes are a good illustration. There are three grades for canned tomatoes starting at the top with U. S. Grade A, or fancy. Then comes U. S. Grade B, which is extra standard or choice. And third down the scale, U. S. Grade C or standard. Everything below standard or Grade C is substandard and our pure food laws now require that substandard canned food carry some statement on the label to indicate its low quality. That doesn't mean that it isn't wholesome. For example, for tomatoes it means this difference. U. S. Grade A

(over)

(Fancy) tomatoes are select, whole or almost whole. They have a uniformly red color, and are practically free from pieces of skin or cores and blemishes. They have the typical flavor of naturally ripened tomatoes. And when the Government inspectors score them, these Grade A canned tomatoes must measure up to 90 points on the official card.

Grade B tomatoes are just a little less perfect, and Grade C just one step below B. The Grade C or standard tomatoes need not be whole but they must be in fairly large pieces and reasonably free from greenish parts and pieces of skin and core. In other words if you were making scalloped tomatoes, Grade C would answer the purpose perfectly. If you wanted some extra nice red tomatoes to serve all by themselves, then you'd probably want Grade A or B.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Sherman, I noticed that sometimes you said U. S. Grade A or B or C and sometimes you gave just the grade name without the U. S. Is there any difference?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, there is this difference. U. S. before the grade name will mean that the food so labeled is put up in a factory under the constant supervision of a government inspector. Of course many factories are not large enough to afford this service. These canneries may pack foods of the same three grades and label them Grade A, B, and C, without the U.S. So whether you see U. S. Grade A or just Grade A on a can, the quality of the food inside is the same.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That certainly gives us the plan of the grading system very clearly, Mr. Sherman. Now, how soon do you think we consumers may expect to find these quality grades on cans of food in the groceries?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, that's up to you women in a way. Cannerymen are now selling thousands of cases of canned foods on the basis of these grades in the wholesale trade. The distributors who put the labels on these cans will add a line showing the grade, whenever they think you really want this information and will pay a premium for the higher grades. Also factories will pack quantities more of canned foods before the season is over. Think of the applesauce alone that will be put up from the early winter apples. The labels on all these cans may carry a statement of quality grade if packers and distributors know you want it. So if you're interested tell your retailer. And if you have the chance, pass the word straight to canning companies and wholesalers of canned goods. The Department of Agriculture stands ready to cooperate with all canning factories who want to put the grade of their goods on the labels.

MISS VAN DEMAN: We'll do our best, Mr. Sherman, and thank you for telling of this new service.

We'll try to keep straight this idea of grading canned food for quality from the other service of inspecting for wholesomeness. It's just like the meat inspecting and meat grading service. The little round purple stamp "U. S. Inspected and Passed" means that the meat is wholesome. But the words "U. S. Good Steer" stamped also in purple ink across a side of beef is a quality grade.

Now, next week you won't be hearing from the Household Calendar, but I'll be here September 20.

Goodbye for this time.